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Literature Department of the Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church.

What One Secretary of Literature Did

156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

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APATHY like a pall had settled upon the Auxiliary at Templeton and all but three yielded to its deadening influence. Neither Sol's sultriest rays, Boreas' chilliest blast, winter's deepest snows, nor fiercest cold, were successful in keeping the *three* from the missionary meeting, who constituted the *life* of the society. With sorrow their thoughts turned to the past when the Auxiliary was first organized with large numbers and much interest.

By appointment they met at the home of one of the three for special prayer and consultation as to the best means to revive the flagging interest. They studied the situation to ascertain the cause of the indifference and prescribe a remedy.

There appeared to be several causes for the present state of affairs, over some of which they had no control. First, two of the most consecrated ones whose voices were always heard in the meetings had

received the call to come up higher. With life's battle done and the victory won, they had exchanged the cross for the crown, and had left a vacancy in the society which had never been filled. Others who had cheerfully aided in every good work in the church and auxiliary had made homes elsewhere, and no new ones had stepped into the gap which they made. Again the novelty of the society had worn away and those who had joined because they liked something new, did very well for a time, but gradually dropped out one by one. Too many society demands in their growing town were made upon others, and some had changed the Missionary Society for the "Woman's Club," thus further depleting the ranks, while several who still attended the meeting appeared so indifferent as to cause much discouragement to the leader. It seemed evident, upon reflection, that the active ones removed from them, and the faithful few who were left, were the ones who had access to the missionary magazines and conned with interest their pages, being on the lookout, also, for anything touching upon missions in the secular papers.

With one accord they ascribed the causes of the indifference to *ignorance*, feeling that if all women possessed the same *knowledge* of missionary work they could not help being interested. Having apparently

diagnosed the case correctly, they planned a remedy, and with fervent prayer that it might be efficacious, separated.

One of the three had recently been appointed Secretary of Literature. She communicated with the Presbyterial Secretary of Literature asking for information about such leaflets as would be likely to arouse the indifferent. The Presbyterial Secretary forwarded a list as requested, and when our secretary had made her purchases from the Woman's Board, she prepared them for circulation. Her selection was as follows: "Why No More Time for the Master's Work?" "Her Son," "Pitchers and Lamps," "Mrs. Matteson's Vision," "Woman's Club of National Interest," and "Our Missionary Box." Being somewhat artistic in her tastes, she bound them in a neat cover, and with her brush painted a delicate design, tied it with ribbon, enclosed a note containing a list of the women of the church, expressing the earnest desire that after the leaflets had been read the little package should be passed on to the next on the list.

She inquired occasionally as to the whereabouts of the booklet, learned it was still traveling, and listened with pleasure to the favorable comments. It was many weeks before it completed the circuit, but, like Noah's dove, from flying hither and thither, it came back to the starting place.

Reading from the Blessed Word that "Where no wood is there the fire goeth out," in order to feed the little flame, she prepared a second booklet with the same exquisite taste. In it she placed: "Our Sort of Folks," "Serving the Present Age," "Aunt Hannah's Partnership," "A Basket Secretary," "Rose Leaves," and "Inasmuch," and started it on its mission.

At this juncture the pastor, who was ready to aid, suggested that the ladies prepare a missionary program for the Wednesday evening prayer meeting. After a conference as to subjects, "The Mormons" was chosen. A white-winged messenger was soon speeding on its way to New York, and quickly came the material for study. A number of people were assigned parts.

"Questions on Mormonism," "Results of Presbyterian Missions in Utah," "Salt Lake Collegiate Institute," telling of our school work; "Are the Mormons Christians?" "Historical Sketch of Mormonism," "Methods of Mormon Missionaries," "A Story of Utah," founded on fact; "A Utah Sketch," showing what our schools did for one Mormon girl, and "From Within One Heart," where the veil is drawn aside and the heartaches of many women revealed; all these opened the eyes of the listeners to the awful blot of Mormonism on our land.

Later came a prayer meeting evening

with the "Mexicans," when the needs of Los Angeles Mission School were studied and those of the Santa Fé Boarding School for girls and the Albuquerque School for Mexican boys.

"A Thirsty Land" and "Benito" were read with deep interest.

After another interval, our *Nation's Wards*, the Indians, was the theme. There is plenty of literature on that subject also, as well as the narratives, "Frank Modoc," "A Missionary Heroine," and "How the Teacher Came for Tatchnee," and they learned the falsity of the statement that "the only good Indian is a *dead* Indian."

Much interest having been aroused, our secretary, remembering the old adage, "Strike while the iron is hot," armed herself with samples of our magazines and started on a thorough canvass of the congregation for subscriptions, and with many arguments in their favor, she succeeded beyond her fondest hopes, and increased the subscription list almost thirty-fold. The leaven which was working had prompted one woman to volunteer to organize a band. She studied "Hints and Helps" for bands, "How Our Mission Band Learned to Pray," "Starting Things," "Children's Home Missionary Meeting," "How Shall We Interest the Children?" and other leaflets, which proved very helpful.

The time seemed ripening for an appeal to the pocketbook. Our secretary had long ago learned that the only gifts to be *depended* on are those prompted by the knowledge of the needs of an object, and her finest skill was now brought into requisition for another compilation of leaflets, which she called the "*giving*" Booklet. It was a thing of beauty and a *capacious* one, for it contained "Deacon Brown's Colt," "God's Tenth," "Shekels," "Her Offering," "Mrs. Pickett's Missionary Box," "Aunt Margaret's Experience," "Systematic Giving," "Inasmuch," "Thanksgiving Ann," and "Prove Me Now Herewith." It was replete with good things, and wafting it on its way with a prayer she went away for a much-needed rest.

Hardly had she laid aside, for the time, her cares, when the news was heralded in all the papers that gold in unlimited quantities had been discovered on the Klondike in frozen Alaska. Then began the mad rush thither, and the excitement of '49 was duplicated, What time more fitting for study of Alaska? In response to her request, she received from the Literature Department of the Home Board, 156 Fifth Avenue, "Facts About Alaska," "A Native Missionary in Alaska," "Sitka Training School," "Our Northernmost Possessions," "Yahk, or Adrift in Alaska,"

"Question Conference on Alaska," "Sheldon Jackson." The evening was particularly interesting. News was received that the Presbyterian Church had already sent missionaries to the gold field, who wer[illegible] carrying with them the inexhaustib[illegible] riches that neither famine nor fever, ava[illegible] lanche nor frost, can take away.

Watchful for opportunities, the other fields, Mountaineers, Freedmen, etc., were also presented from time to time.

And what was the effect on that half-dead society? Many new members; *intelligent* interest; loosened purse strings. And the end is not yet.

MRS. A. W. BILL.

Price one cent each; 75 cts. per 100.

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One copy of each leaflet mentioned may be had, postpaid, for 85 cents. Send for catalogue for lists of leaflets on other topics mentioned